



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #786
July 21, 2021



Hugh Crooks, Jr., Chair
Robin Umberg, Vice-Chair
Todd Trotter, Member
Zoe Dunning, Member

Ed Campbell, Member
Vacant, Member
Vacant, Member
Tina Lassiter, Executive Officer

The California Veterans Board (CVB) met utilizing "Bluejeans" videoconferencing on July 21 at 9:30 am.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Hugh Crooks, Vice Chair Robin Umberg, Ed Campbell, Zoe Dunning, and Tina Lassiter

Absent: - Todd Trotter and Megan Elsea

25 members of the public were present for portions of the meeting.

Chair Crooks presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Crooks welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. The Board Members introduced themselves.

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approved minutes from the May meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

1. Linda George, whose father is on the Yountville waiting list, addressed the Board and thanked them for all that they do.
2. Elizabeth Rubalcava, the new VSO from the Ventura Home, introduced herself and is excited to get started working with the Board.

PRESENTATIONS –

1. Theresa Gunn, Deputy Secretary, Farm and Home Loans division, gave an update of the Farm and Home Loan program (attachment).
2. Coby Petersen, Deputy Secretary, Homes division, gave an update on the Homes division. The division's major focus has been fighting covid. All the homes have done remarkably well through the recent surveys and, in fact, two homes, Fresno and Chula Vista received national recognition for having gone above the level of star rating. Yountville and Chula Vista were also listed in Newsweek's top 100 healthcare facilities.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Secretary Imbasciani thanked all for attending and gave recognition to Coby for the great work that he and his staff have done, and are doing, to keep our resident Veterans safe in the Homes. He then reported as follows:

Covid - CalVet has managed well in the pandemic due to the dedication of the CalVet team. The challenge continues to encourage all to get vaccinated or the need remains to continue testing on a regular basis. The Delta variant is threatening and will keep all vigilant.

Budget - Calvet has benefitted very well in the recent budget. Secretary Imbasciani expressed his gratitude to Governor Newsom for his focus on California Veterans.

Cemetery - Fort Ord will have its inauguration of phase two most likely on Veterans day. There has recently been positive movement in Orange County looking at a new site, Gypsum Canyon.

General – Secretary Imbasciani recently met the new VA Chief of Staff, Tanya Bradshaw, whose interest was primarily in talking with CalVet about housing and homelessness.

Vacancies – West LA has an appointment vacancy, the Departments' Chief of Legal position remains vacant, as well as Deputy Secretary for Women Veterans.

Questions/Comments: Secretary Imbasciani and Chair Crooks recently attended a celebration in Palmdale honoring the REN (Residential Enriched Neighborhoods) program where Veterans provide 500 hours of sweat equity for the home that will become theirs.

Member Campbell inquired on the status of the Board vacancies to which Secretary Imbasciani replied that he is hopeful those vacancies will be filled soon as the Appointments Secretary in the Governor's office has returned from maternity leave.

CHAIR UPDATE – Chair Crooks reported that he has been focusing on the Board meetings going forward and hoping to keep the participants returning and believes a hybrid type meeting would be beneficial as the state begins to safely open up.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. **Hugh Crooks:** Communications and Marketing – see above.
2. **Robin Umberg:** The budget information is good news. 20 million to West LA for housing has been a long time coming, as well as 25 million to a three-

year pilot program to support a variety of different Veteran Organizations in their services to our Veterans.

Regulations: Nothing to report at this time.

3. **Ed Campbell:** Homes – The Ventura home is two people short of 100% vaccinated. The anticipation of the new VA clinic (CBOC) continues to mount. The extensive sprinkler system repair is almost complete and the carpeting will be replaced soon. Mr. Campbell expressed how nice it is for the home to be returning to normal a bit.
4. **Robin Umberg** Legislation/Regulations – see above.
5. **Todd Trotter:** Home Loans – No report at this time.
6. **Zoe Dunning:** Underrepresented and Women Veterans – Member Dunning reported that she has been asked to speak at a Women Veterans Alliance meeting titled an “Unconference”, in Las Vegas, where she will speak on how to be appointed to boards and commissions. She also reminded Secretary Imbasciani that the 10-year anniversary of “Don’t ask, don’t tell” is approaching and suggested some form of recognition for that.

Questions/Comments: Chair Crooks encouraged the Board members to venture out on Veterans day and deliver proclamations to businesses and/or entities that provide exemplary assistance to our Veterans.

Executive Officer update – Executive Officer Lassiter reported that she continues to work on outreach and hybrid meetings. She asked for opinions on travel. Most still lean toward virtual.

OLD BUSINESS –

Board Administrative Book; Review

- #4, Board Responsibilities, approved/no changes.
- #8, Schedule of Meetings, approved/no changes.
- #16, Production of (Appeal) Record by Division, approved/no changes.

NEW BUSINESS –

Receipt of new appeals and complaints: None

BOARD COMMENTS:

Next Meeting: November 22, 2021

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:30